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—Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.

This special number of AIM commemorates the 99th birthday of the Mother. The Mother is no more with us in the physical body in which She had incarnated, but She is still with us, in us and around us. For, "The Mother is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence."

February 21, 1978 is our Sweet Mother's Birth Centenary Day. A special year is now before us. A year for our complete consecration. Let us take these three words of the Mother "Remember and Offer" *as our mantra and make it an integral part of our life. Beginning with this number, we will give some special matter befitting this theme, during this important year. In the following pages we shall read Sri Aurobindo's "Hymn to the Mother of Radiances" and Shri K. D. Sethna's "The Mother — Some General Truths and Personal Facts".*

Hymn to the Mother of Radiances

An inner fullness has come in like the coming in of light in dark caves. It fills, it illumines, it vibrates the multiple strings of life; it has found the contact with the forgotten achievements of the past to enable me to start the new ones of the future on the basis of the changing formations of the present. The currents of life well up to meet the descending rays of light from the upper heavens for transmutation of the base and the dark into the luminous and the true, for transmutation of the ugly and the wrong into the beautiful and the right.

O Mother of Radiances, you have dawned in the narrow horizons of my mind. Out of its depthless rigidities, in the midst of its walled-up spaces you have created a heart-like something that will live its eternal life. You have revealed to me a chamber alive and warm within the mind's substanceless polar regions and there I can safely retire and find in you my refuge.

The lower network of moving forces remains, but I feel your presence in its midst. The higher network of moving forces remains, and here you have stepped in also shedding a warmth of life that was not there before, you have turned the dull grey luminosity into a brilliance of living waters. Your active and living presence is everywhere; you have heeded my words of aspiration, the fire of my demand for your omnipresence.

More than what I ignorantly sought for, you have revealed to me. You are intimate and one with me when in truth and law and yet away and far off from me when in error and in falsehood.

When there are no more darkening shadows about me; when you see me bared of all shams and shows in every part of the being; when you see in every cell of my body an eternal home for you and an eternal temple; when you see me one with you in identity and still worshipping you; when you melt the compact gold of knowledge in the living and running waters of devotion; when you break my earth and release the energies; when you turn my pride into power in your hands and my ignorance into light, my narrowness into wideness, my selfishness into a true gathering together of forces in one centre, my greed into a capacity of untiring search after the truth for the attainment of its substances, my egoism into the true and conscious instrumental centre, my mind into a channel for you to descend, my heart into your heart of pure fire and flame, my life into a pure and translucent substance for your handling, my body into a conscious vessel for holding what of you is meant for me; then, O Mother of Radiances, my aim in life now and hereafter will be fulfilled in the true and right and vast way. Aspiration wakes in me! Achieve in me all that I flame for!

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Hour of God*, Cent. ed. vol. 17, pp. 3-4)

"When most unseen, most mightily she works;..."

Savitri

Sri Aurobindo

The Mother

Some General Truths and Personal Facts

The One whom we call the Supreme is the utter Unmanifest. The creative Conscious Force of the Supreme is the Divine Mother in Her transcendent poise, *Aditi*, holding the Truths that have to be manifested out of the absolute Mystery. Through the transcendent Mother and by Her creativity the whole universe has taken birth. And when the Supreme manifests in the world His own personal being, He does it also through Her transcendence. In Her universal aspect She is *Mahāśakti*. All the Gods and Goddesses are of Her making — they are but powers that express Her.

There are many powers of the universal Mother which are not yet made manifest to us, and many universes too which are still in the Unmanifest and which the Divine Mother can create. What has been created is just one system of possibilities out of the innumerable that She and the Supreme can realise.

Time and again this Divine Creatrix takes a direct hand in the workings of the world. Through individual forms she manifests some ray of herself: being Supernature, the truth of all that Nature here strives to express, she makes one aspect or another of her light descend in all the ages of history and, when the hour is ripe, even a full individual embodiment can come forth.

It is such an embodiment, amidst a world of human beings, that Sri Aurobindo set before us when, on November 24, 1926, he charged with the care of his Ashram the radiant personality whom he called the Mother and into whose shaping hands he asked us to put ourselves as children.

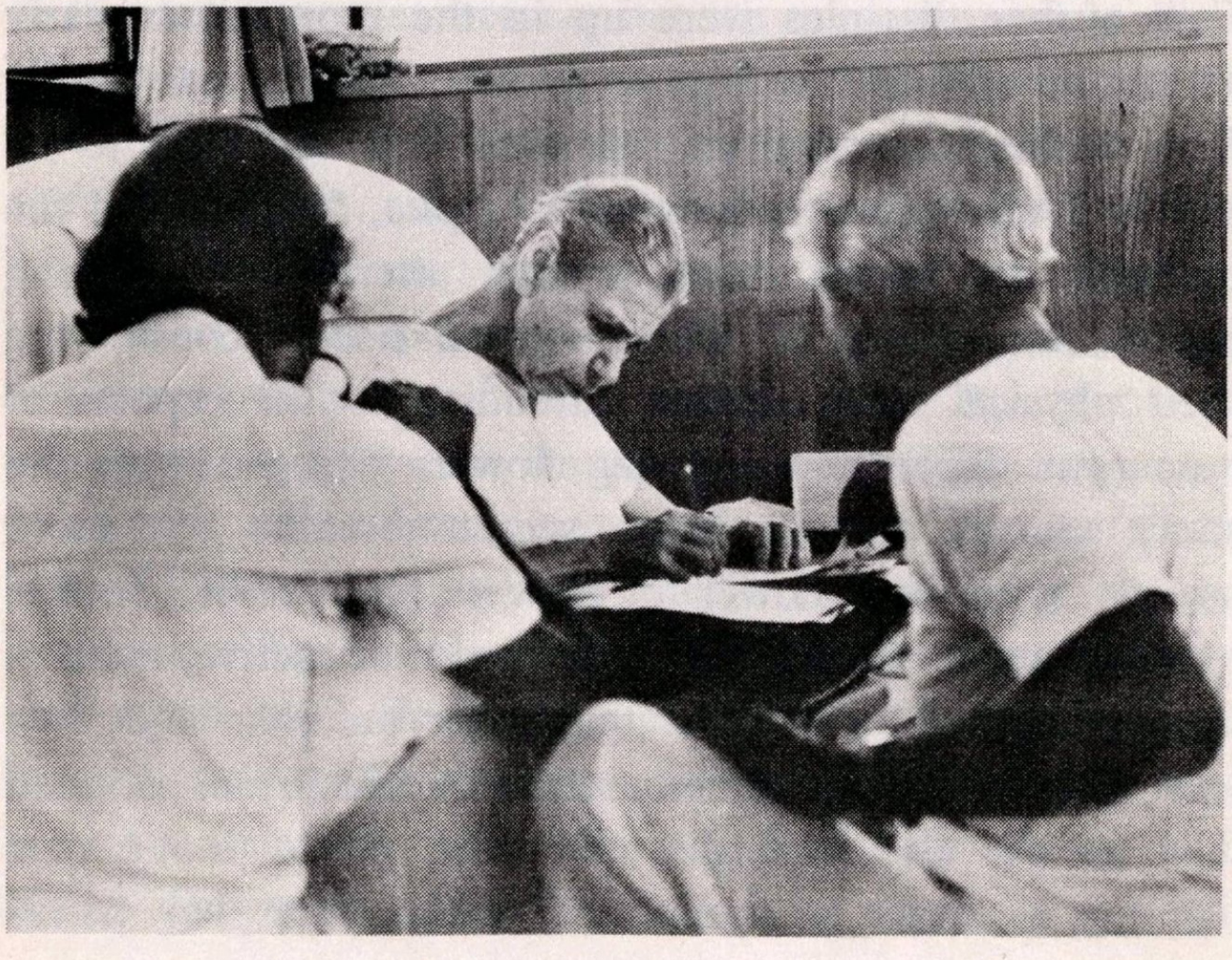
For forty-seven years she played her mighty part to perfection. Now she is no more in her body: she passed away on November 17, 1973. And her ninety-nineth birthday falls on February 21 this year without her bodily presence. But no! we should only say "bodily existence". For, if ever there was a bodily presence which could never be effaced, it was the Mother's. Timeless was she not only in her inmost being but also in all the expressions of it in her outermost activity. During the last few years she was not up and about in the same way as before, but we must remember what she said to some disciples gathered in her room on April 2, 1972: "The body has some difficulty, so I can't be active, alas. It is not because I am old — I am not old.... I am younger than most of you. If I am here inactive, it is because the body has given itself definitively to prepare the transformation. But the consciousness is clear and we are here to work — rest and enjoyment will come afterwards. Let us do our work here." That is the typical Mother. And even in her last days, when her body had become exceedingly weak, she would say: "Make me walk." As late as November 14 she made her attendants lift her out of her bed. She tried to walk but staggered and almost collapsed. She took about 20 minutes to recover. But the

moment she felt better she started saying: "Lift me up again, I shall walk." The constant urge towards activity of such an indomitable spirit could not help rendering her bodily presence a perennial part of our awareness. Naturally, therefore, she is in our memory most as we knew her before an acute form was taken by the difficulties of the body which she attributed to the exacting incalculable experiment of what she and Sri Aurobindo called "supramentalisation" — that is, the total "divinisation" of the physical being.

Right up to her ninety-third year the Mother was visibly true to her role of Divine Shakti on earth, but her best manifestation as the Ageless One was round about her eightieth year. For, contrary to expectation, it would have been the extreme of ineptitude to say on her eightieth birthday that she was eighty years old. Few of her disciples were up in the morning as early as she, few turned to repose as late. And it was hardly four or five years before this time that she used to be on her feet, without a moment's respite, from five in the morning to nearly two in the afternoon — meeting people, ministering to their spiritual needs, considering their physical requirements, attending to the reports of numerous departments, giving flowers charged with the soul's secrets, making those secrets breathe out more sweetly with that flower of flowers, her smile. In the evening again, from four she would be active, with a little recreation by way of tennis for an hour and then with a large amount of re-creation of lost joy or clouded light in the thousand disciples who would move past her for a couple of hours to receive from her hands

The Mother at the Playground

The Mother at work in her room



a nut or a sweet through which their very bodies could absorb grace. Even after eighty, her manifold activity was of one young, and at the day's end there was none who left the Ashram Playground with a fresher face and a brisker step.

Watching her, day after day, we realised that more than mere words were what she had spoken on old age. She had said, in effect: "The coming of old age is due to two suggestions. First, the general collective suggestion — people telling you that you are getting old and can't do one thing or another. There is also the individual suggestion which keeps repeating, 'I am getting old, I mustn't attempt this or that.' The truth is quite different. Before thirty, the energy goes out in a spendthrift way because of the play of impulses. After thirty, there is a settling down and one is expected to have a plenitude of energy. At fifty, blossoming begins. At eighty, one becomes capable of full production."

*

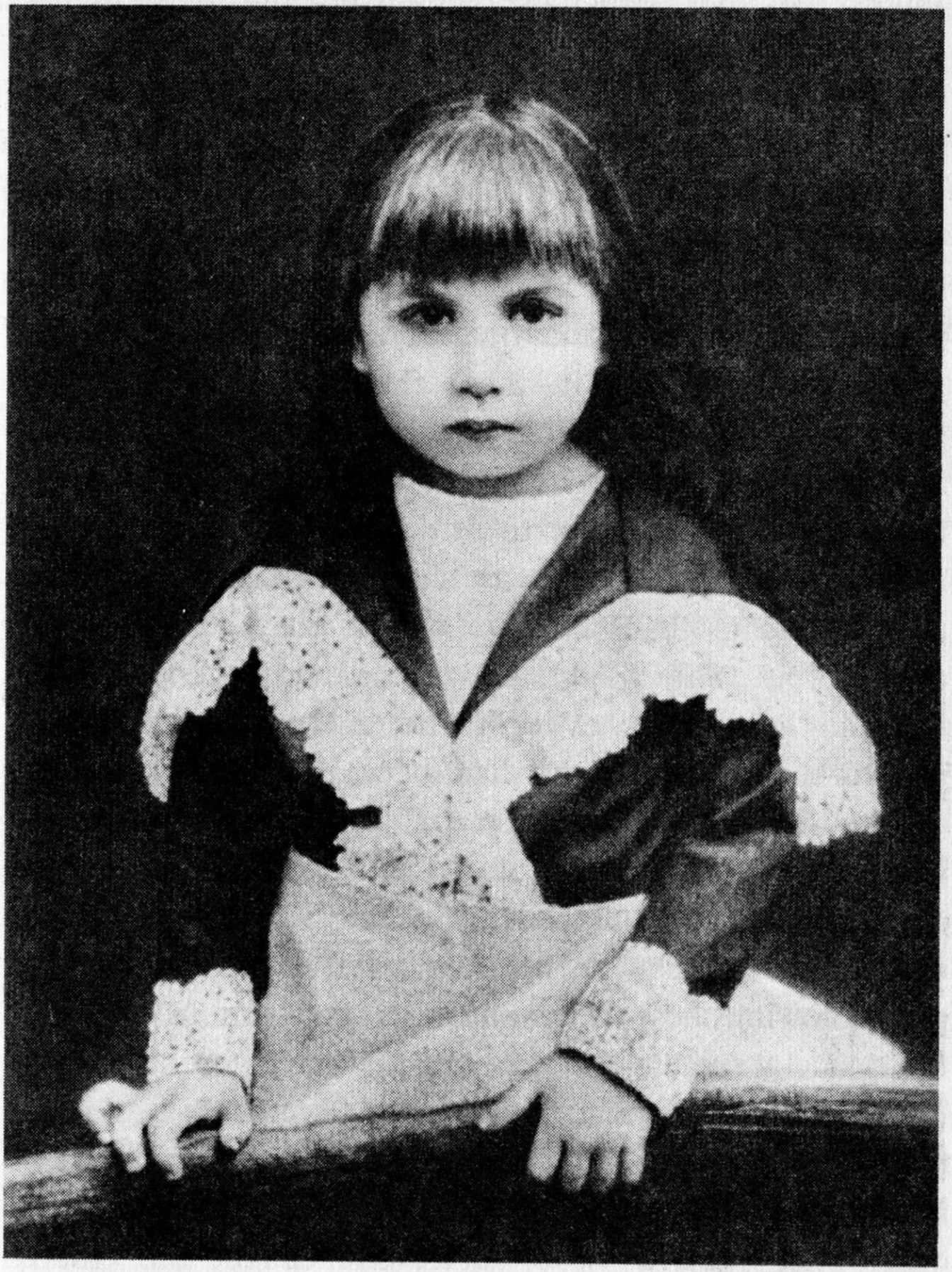
Marvellously full indeed has been the Mother's productiveness, for it is rich with the power of a consciousness more than human. Even at the age of five she was aware that she did not belong to this world, that she did not have a merely human consciousness. Her Yoga may be said to have begun in that early period. Her parents had a small chair, with a little back, made for her — she would sit in it and meditate. She used to see a column of light above her head. As her brain was yet a child's and therefore insufficiently

developed, she could not make out what it was, however much she tried. But the general sense of a high and vast mission accompanied always that experience.

Neither of her parents knew anything about this or who she was. And she did not tell them anything. On rare occasions, at a little later period, she tried to give some hint, but they failed to understand; nor, if they had caught its meaning, would they have believed her. Her mother was a positivist and materialist, in keeping with the tendency of those days, and wanted her and her brother to be ideal children according to her own notions. As for her father, he did not care one way or the other: he was a businessman.

All during her girlhood she was conscious of a more than human force behind her and often entering her body and working there in a supernormal way. This force she knew to be her own secret being. A few instances of its working may be given. She was about seven. There was a boy of nearly thirteen, a bully who always used to mock at girls, saying that they were good for nothing. One day she asked him, "Will you shut up?" He kept mocking. Suddenly she took hold of him, lifted him up from the ground and threw him down with a thump though she was so much smaller than he. The force that had come down into her and made her tremendously strong was recognised by her later in life as Mahakali.

Another instance. She had gone to play in a forest near Fontainebleu. She was climbing a steep hill, when her foot slipped and she began to fall down. The road below was strewn with sharp black stones. As she was



The Mother at the age of seven

falling, she felt somebody supporting her in a lap, as it were, and slowly bringing her down. When she reached the ground she was standing safely on her two feet, to the glad astonishment of all her companions.

In her sixteenth year she joined a Studio to learn painting. It was one of the biggest studios in Paris. She happened to be the youngest there. All the other people used to talk and quarrel among themselves, but she never took part in these things — she was always grave and busy with her work. They called her the Sphinx. Whenever they had any trouble or wrangle, they would come to her to settle their affairs. She could read their thoughts and, as she replied more often to their thoughts than to their words, they felt very uncomfortable. She would also make her decisions without the least fear, even if the authorities were concerned. Once a girl who had been appointed monitrice of the Studio got into the bad books of the elderly lady who was the Head of the place. This lady wanted to send away the monitrice. So the Sphinx was sought out by the young for help. She felt sympathy for the girl, knowing how poor she was and that if she left the place it would be the end of her painting career. The Head of the Studio had now to confront a determined little champion. Sensible pleading was first tried, but when it fell on deaf ears the champion took another line. With a bit of anger she caught the elderly woman's hand and held it in a firm grip as if the very bones would be crushed. It was soon agreed that the monitrice would be allowed to stay on. Mahakali had been at work again.

The Sphinx of the Studio was also the same serious self at home. She rarely smiled or laughed. And for this, once when she was about twenty, she got a scolding from her mother. She simply replied that she had to bear all the sorrows of the world. Her mother thought she had gone crazy. On another occasion she was scolded by her for not listening to what she had been ordered to do. Then she answered that no earthly power could command her obedience.

We must not imagine that the Sphinx was morose or rebellious in general. She had enough of true joy and consideration. She was just weighted with the secret of the great work she had to do, and she could let nothing out of tune with it shape her actions.

Before this time, she had already arrived at a fairly precise idea of her mission. Between the ages of eleven and twelve, a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to her not only the existence of God but man's possibility of uniting with Him, of realising Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon earth in a life divine. And during her body's sleep occult instructions were given to her by several teachers, some of whom she met afterwards on the physical plane. Later on, as the inner and outer development proceeded, a psychic and spiritual relation with one of these beings became more and more clear and frequent and, although she knew little of the Indian philosophies and religions at that time, she was led to call him Krishna and henceforth she was aware that it was with him, whom she knew she would meet some day, that the divine work was to be done. Being a

painter she made a psychically impressionist sketch of him and waited for it to spring to life some day for even her physical eyes.

A number of years she spent in Algeria, learning the higher occultism from a Polish adept, Théon by name, and his still more profoundly experienced French wife. Under them she would put her physical body into a trance and awake progressively in her subtle sheaths putting to sleep the subtle sheath next to the physical, she would grow aware in the one on a deeper level she thus climbed the whole grade of what occultists have charted out as supraphysical planes, and became acquainted with their laws and powers and operations, so that she might place all available means at the disposal of her spiritual ideal. On more than one occasion, so complete was her withdrawal from the body that the latter lay in a condition of temporary death. But the release, which could have absorbed her in the Divine Existence for good and plunged the embodied being into its Supreme Origin, was refused by her She saw the world in its long travail and returned to the body by sheer force, a painful process when the connecting link between the subtle and the gross has been snapped.

In 1910 she came to hear of Sri Aurobindo who had settled in Pondicherry earlier in the same year From then onwards her one desire was to visit India, the land which she had always cherished as her true mother

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The Mother at Miogodani Machi, Tokyo, Japan, 1916 ▶

country. And in 1914 the joy of seeing India was granted her — and the very heart of that joy was the meeting with Sri Aurobindo. When she saw Sri Aurobindo she recognised the original of her visionary sketch. This was enough to convince her fully that her place and her work were near him in India.

Here we may remark that the whole truth about her choice to reside in India is not told when we have noted this meeting with Sri Aurobindo. The whole truth is compassed only when we realise why Sri Aurobindo himself, who had a wide Western education in England and wrote creatively in English and could have easily made his mark in Europe in whose culture he had been steeped, took India for his field, not only politically but also culturally and spiritually, assimilated the whole genius of this country and made it the central fount of his own future. India holds within her a supreme potentiality of spiritual response and development because of an extraordinary history of soul-culture: a vibrant psychological atmosphere is there, breathing life and vigour into all formations of the soul and rendering possible new evolutions of the Spirit's power. That is why Sri Aurobindo came an Indian and went to the West to bring the West to India for a novel world-wide synthesis of spiritual aspiration; that is also why the Mother came a Westerner but with the eternal Indian within her, the born God-seeker and God-realiser, and joined forces with Sri Aurobindo to complete by her Indianised West his Westernised India, so that all mankind might grow to supermanhood with secret sustenance drawn from the soil where the wonderful seed

of Avatarhood had often been sown.

The Mother saw the all-consummating Avatar in Sri Aurobindo, and Sri Aurobindo saw in her the Shakti that would make his Yoga an organised starting-point of a new chapter of earth's history. In the meeting on March 29, 1914, the true relationship between her and him, which she later expressed in a pithy sentence, must have flashed into awareness: "Without him, I exist not; without me, he is unmanifest."

But the master means of manifestation, no less than the One who was to be manifested, was directly approached only on that day. Before meeting Sri Aurobindo the Mother used to find for her various spiritual experiences and realisations a poise for life-work by giving them a mould with the enlightened mind. All kinds of powerful ideas she had for world-upliftment — ideas artistic, social, religious. At sight of Sri Aurobindo she aspired to a total cessation of all mental moulds. She did not speak a word nor did he: she just sat at his feet and closed her eyes, keeping her mind open to him. After a while there came, from above, an infinite silence that settled in her mind. Everything was gone, all those fine and great ideas vanished and there was only a vacant imperturbable waiting for what was beyond mind. For days and days she carefully guarded her absolute silence and then slowly the Truth began to flow down from above. The Truth alone grew the substance of consciousness. No mental activity was left. And from that day in 1914 she never lived in the mind. Ideas got formed not on a mental initiative but in response to the Truth and in order to make the Truth

"It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth: His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be, indeed, established upon earth."

30. 3. 1914 THE MOTHER

mentally comprehensible and in order to transmit some experience of the Truth to the ordinary world.

Sri Aurobindo had known in 1908 the cessation of all mental activity in an utter Nirvana which became the basis on which the dynamic and creative side of his Yoga proceeded. Although he experienced this cessation six years before the Mother, both of them soon found on comparing notes that they had worked essentially on the same lines of an integral development, seeking to gather together all the movements of the spiritual life and carry them to a new goal. Only, a question that had haunted her from humanity's past had remained unanswered till she met Sri Aurobindo: Must always the attempt to establish a Kingdom of Heaven on earth fall tragically short of fruition? When she put the question to Sri Aurobindo he looked tranquilly at her and said, "This time it will not be so."

The secret of averting failure was what he called the Supermind, the Divine's own self-dynamism that had never before been brought into action in the world — the Supermind not only reached in its free and sovereign height but also carried down from there into Matter's depths to release in them its own hidden counterpart which is the buried source of all evolutionary striving towards divinity.

In those first few months of the Mother's stay in India, the mission of which she had been aware since childhood grew increasingly clear. She has hinted at this in the entry dated June 26, 1914, of her *Prayers and Meditations*:

"O Lord, grant that we may rise above the ordinary

forms of manifestation, so that Thou mayst find the instruments necessary for Thy new manifestation.

"Let us not lose sight of the goal; grant that we may be always in union with Thy force, the force which the earth does not yet know and which Thou hast given us the mission to reveal to her."

An idea of the intensity with which the Mother devoted herself, from 1914 onwards, to her work for the world can be faintly formed if we remember what Sri Aurobindo remarked later to a disciple. He said that he had never known what spiritual self-surrender could be until she had thrown her whole being at his feet.

It was in 1914 too that she experienced an identification of even her most outer consciousness with the Universal Mother. She has written about this in her *Prayers and Meditations*. She has described there two successive identifications. Of course, she had known, long before, that she was the Mother: only the complete identification took place now, after her coming to India. This was but natural, since no other country has felt and known the universal aspect so intensely.

Her diary which comprised the *Prayers and Meditations* was started two years earlier. Every day at 5 a.m. she used to sit down to meditate near her window with a Kashmiri shawl wrapped round her. The meditation being over, she would note down her thoughts and experiences; but they were meant only for herself and she always used to lock up her diary. In 1916 she stopped writing, but on her final arrival at Pondicherry in 1920 she took it up again. Later, it was only occasionally that she wrote. What she wrote covered five

big volumes. The first to see them was Sri Aurobindo and it was he who asked her to get them published as they were sure to be of immense help to others and would at the same time show what the physical consciousness is capable of achieving. So he made a selection and she got it printed. She had the rest burnt in a boiler which is still in use at the Ashram.

The utter absence of self-attachment which is in this act impresses us in all the acts of the Mother. She never seemed to think of her own ends or comfort or satisfaction. For many years ago she did not have a regular bed to rest in. There was hardly even any privacy. Then some disciples pleaded with her to let them build a room of her own. Her constant gesture was to give and give, and there was no regret if the giving bore no palpable fruit. Nor did her vision admit failure. Once she indicated how Sri Aurobindo and she worked. She said that even when they saw that a disciple was acting under wrong forces or was about to revolt and leave the Ashram they would not envisage a dark end for him but set the delicate balance so that the other side, the spiritually receptive part, might not go down. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo never saw things in small blocks of time and space: a boundless vista was ever in their eyes. And even beyond time and space their sense of being extended. Vividly does one of her disciples remember what she spoke apropos of her own paintings. Himself an amateur with the brush, he was acutely concerned about the almost thoughtless scatter of her best work over many countries. She mentioned a decade in which she had done her finest pieces and

Self-portrait by the Mother

said that most of them had been given away to various people at different times and in different places. The disciple said: "Should we not do something to collect them again?" The Mother calmly replied: "Why? Is it so important?" "Surely, such masterpieces deserve to be found and kept safely. You took so much pains over them." "It does not matter." "But, Mother, don't you think there will be a loss if they are not preserved?" Then the Mother, with eyes far away yet full of tenderness for the agitated disciple, said in a quiet half-whisper: "You know, we live in eternity."

Suddenly the disciple woke up to the truth of the Mother's being. "Of course, of course," he broke out, realising how often, seeing her walk our little ways, we forgot the ineffable Plenitude that was she behind and beyond her dealings with us, the Plenitude which yet took on itself the difficulties and limitations that were ours, so that passing through them she might be the exemplar of not only a divine victory but also a human fulfilment.

An open reminder of the truth of her being came most emphatically in 1926 when Sri Aurobindo put the Ashram in her charge. To be precise, there was on November 24 of that year a descent of what Sri Aurobindo terms the Overmind, the highest dynamic divine consciousness that had been realised so far in the world: he brought it down into the very material being, thus carrying one step forward the work done by the previous Avatar Sri Krishna who had brought down its influence into earth-life. With the descent of this consciousness into Sri Aurobindo the ground was

prepared for the future descent of the Supermind, the integral Truth-Consciousness of the Divine in which lies the secret power of a complete transformation of earth-existence, even to the very cells of the body. When the Overmind was brought down, Sri Aurobindo summoned all those who were staying near him and told them that the time had come for him to withdraw into seclusion for concentrated work towards the Supermind's descent and that henceforth the Mother would be in the forefront, his Shakti and their Guru.

The nine or ten months after the Overmind's descent were a history of spectacular spiritual events. All who were present have testified that miracles were the order of the day. What can be called miracles happen every day even now in the Ashram — wherever a great spiritual Force is at work the miraculous is inevitable — but many such events occur without any *éclat* and often wear even the appearance of natural phenomena. Those which were common occurrences in those ten months were most strikingly miraculous and, if they had continued, a new religion could have been established with the whole world's eyes focussed in wonder on Pondicherry. But the spectacular period terminated with an incident of profound significance. The Mother received one day what she has called the Word of Creation. Just as the God Brahma is said to have brought forth the world with his Word of Creation, the fiat of a new world that could be marvellously built lay ready with the Mother. A superhuman world was on the verge of being materialised.

With this power the Mother went to Sri Aurobindo's

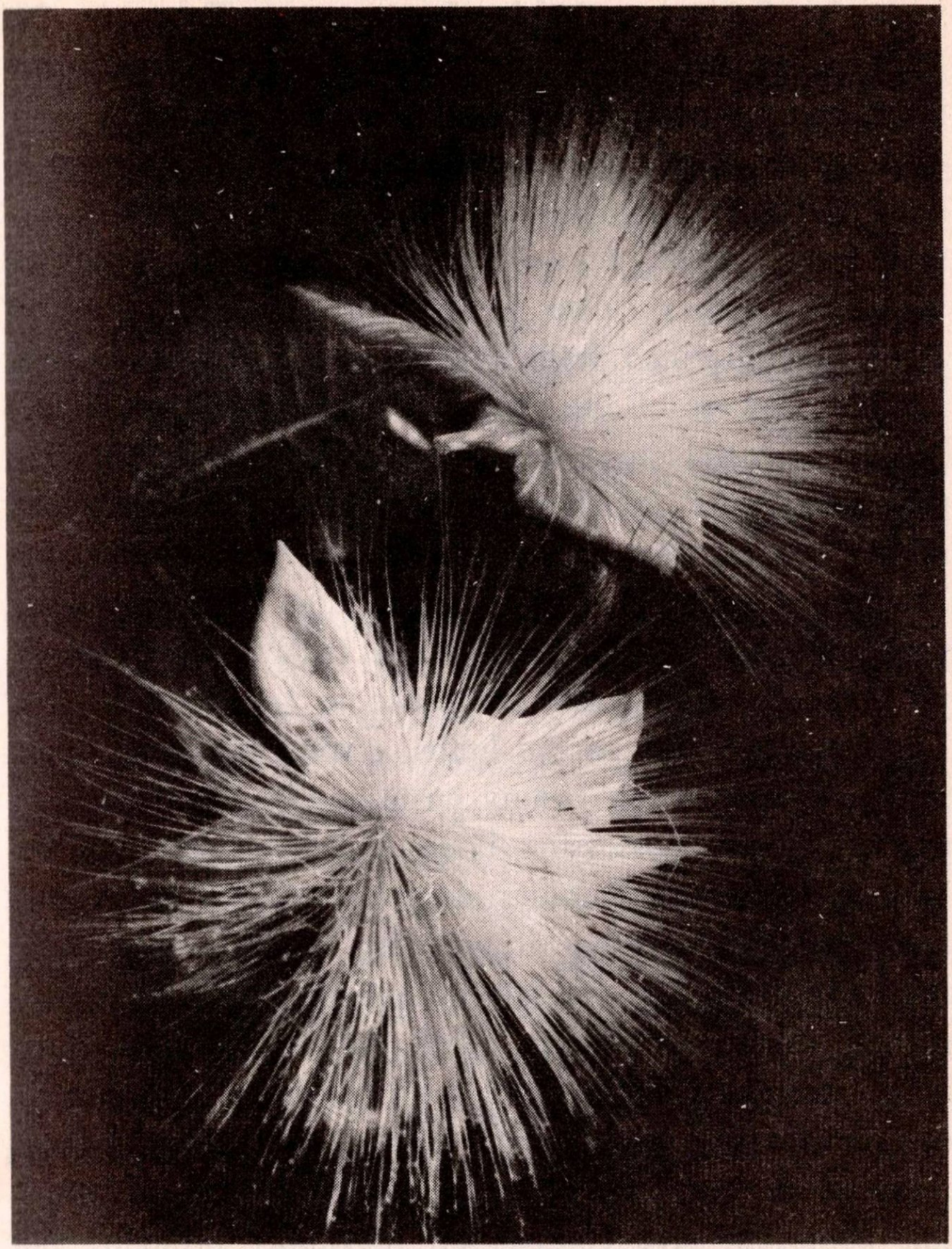
room and told him: "I have got the Word of Creation." Sri Aurobindo sat silent for a while and then said: "This Creation is from the Overmind. And we do not want that. We have to build the Supermind's world." The Mother went back to her own room. She concentrated intensely for two hours and at the end of them she had completely dissolved the whole new Creation that had been on the brink of precipitation on earth. The greatest power in any hands during human history was set aside as if it were a trifle — and all because Sri Aurobindo had said that nothing short of the highest divine Truth was the ideal of manifestation for him and her. Miraculously grand though the manifestation would have been of the Overmind deities, it would not have been an utter transformation of life and would have stood in the way of a still greater glory. The very grandeur of it would have filled the aspiring gaze of mankind and checked it from straining for anything beyond it — at least for millennia.

With that unparalleled act of obedience and surrender by the Mother at one gesture from Sri Aurobindo the long laborious period of gradual preparation for the Supermind's world started — on the one hand the drawing down of the supreme Truth-Consciousness from above and on the other the digging into what Sri Aurobindo designates the Inconscient, the apparent origin of evolution on earth, the seeming negation of the Divine within which the integral Divinity has to be manifested, converting all the painful terms of the Ignorance into the terms of Knowledge and Bliss.

Twelve years after the descent of the Overmind into

the physical being of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the greater aim seemed on the point of achievement. The Mother remarked in 1954 that even as far back as 1938 she used to see the Supermind descending into Sri Aurobindo's body but what could not be done at that time was to fix it in the physical being. The first fixing took place in circumstances mind bafflingly dramatic. Twelve more years elapsed, and then Sri Aurobindo gave up his body, went through what appeared to be a disease with a fatal ending but what, in consideration of the extraordinary concomitants of that illness and that death, can only be regarded as a supreme strategic sacrifice. Sri Aurobindo, in view of the lack of preparedness in the world to receive and hold the descending Supermind, gathered as it were the whole force of mortal fate into his semi-divinised body and in the act of giving up this body exhausted that force in essence and principle and drew down to earth and fixed there the supramental Light. He took a drastic short cut towards a goal which otherwise would have taken decades to approach. As soon as he withdrew from his physical envelope the supramental Light made its permanent base in the Mother's body, beginning with the brain-mind. This is what is known as "the Mind of Light".

From then onward a deeper and deeper digging-in by the Light continued. In reaction against the invasion by the Truth-Consciousness the powers of the Ignorance attempted a desperate obstruction again and again. But Sri Aurobindo's sacrifice had already delivered the first of the finishing strokes to them. And



SUPRAMENTAL ACTION

An action which is not exclusive but total

(Spiritual significance and explanation are given by the Mother)

Botanical name: Barringtonia speciosa *Common name:* Mudilla

with the Supramental Manifestation on February 29, 1956, when the Consciousness and Power of the Supermind became part of the earth's atmosphere, as it were — a power subtly yet directly at work on a universal scale in the midst of the old forces — the complete victory was assured, whose ultimate outer sign would be what the Mother called in her New Year Message of 1957 "the glorified body" which can conquer all Evil.

The process of the "glorified body" went on in the Mother — visible to a few whose sight, piercing through the outer eyes' blindness, could catch the descended *kāraṇa śarīra*, the causal sheath, at work within the Mother, a white glory into which the outer substance was gradually being absorbed or, rather, which slowly projected itself into that substance to transform it. The Light played about in the limbs, coming forward, drawing back, now a soft beauty enshrined in the flesh, now a great power possessing bone and tissue till one beheld no longer the familiar shape we adored but a perfect Goddess suffusing it and for a while blotting it from the gaze. But not rapidly enough could the supramental sheath exteriorise itself, for the Mother stood in no immune isolation, she took hundreds of imperfect consciousnesses into herself, worked out their defects, repaired in her own body the constant damage which this comprehensive compassion inevitably brought: her aim was to carry the world with her and to prepare it for the full manifestation which it would scarcely have been able to bear if she had sought her own perfection to the neglect of humanity's cry for inner help and divinity's call to live for a collective triumph instead

of an individual achievement.

A farther step towards the conquest of all Evil was disclosed in the Message of January 1, 1958, in which she spoke of the consent of material Nature to the demand for transformation. Nature has always been rejected by spiritual seekers and left to her own devices of slow circuitous development and aeonic travail with ill-lit forces. Nature, by being thrown back on herself, has avenged the rejection by obstructing with those forces the occasional pull on her for collaboration by seekers of the Spirit. The Mother's mission was to take Nature into herself, for indeed she was in essence all that is here in the very stone of material existence: a saviour love has been hers that shirks nothing, uplifts everything and makes even dust divine without annulling it, since even dust has its counterpart in the Supreme and a destiny of fulfilment here and now.

Nearly ninety-nine years has the saviour love been the earth's companion. A blessed day is February 21 in its reminder to us of the long labour and of the fateful moment which saw its beginning. May our hearts beat in tune with that moment and be re-born from the sweetness and strength of this day that is effulgent with the Spirit's own sun — the Mother's face.

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Perhaps the intensest impetus towards the required re-birth has come from the moment that saw what looked like a catastrophic cutting-short of the Mother's long labour: 7.25 p.m. of November 17, 1973. Mind-bewildering as well as heart-shattering though it seemed

at first, an understanding has grown steadily that the Mother did something tremendous when she left her body — an act comparable to the *grande finale* of Sri Aurobindo's life on December 5, 1950.

She has said time and again that he gave up his individual supramentalisation, abandoned the process of divinising completely his body, for the sake of hastening the hour of the earth's collective supramental realisation. And repeatedly too she has said that Sri Aurobindo had asked her to complete his Yoga of Transformation. Her "death", therefore, must be Aurobindonian in its own way. It can only be seen as simultaneously one more push to the mighty project of divinising the human race and a further step towards materialising the supramental sheath which was waiting on the plane closest to the earth, the plane known in Sri Aurobindo's system of spiritual experience as the subtle-physical.

The plan so far was to fuse with that sheath the gross-physical envelope whose cells had been fast opening up to the Supermind's luminous force. Lately the Supermind itself had once possessed the Mother's most external consciousness for a few seconds. Her physical being was proceeding rapidly to absorb the causal body's influence, but the shock of the master-power was also immense and the physical being came on more than one occasion to the verge of literally dying so as to make room for the new life. In spite of all dangers she never stopped her fight for transformation. But she declared too that the final Will of the Supreme had not yet been disclosed to the body — whether her fight

would be directly crowned with success or the fighting instrument would have to be given up in order to serve the Lord who always knows best how to accomplish His work. Evidently, the Divine Will was found by her to go against a direct triumph. Without a moment's hesitation she exercised the Supramental Avatar's right consciously to decide her own departure. She took her station in the waiting causal body, in which during the last few months of tranced inner withdrawal she must have stayed continually. Staying there, while still keeping her physical sheath alive, she must have assimilated the essence of the latter's achievement into the causal body and thus rendered that body denser and brought its subtle substance nearer to gross matter. Now, in place of matter becoming supramentalised in the Mother, the Supermind stands ready to be materialised as the Mother.

From that dynamic poise it carries on the long labour of terrestrial evolution which the Mother and Sri Aurobindo undertook. As the material form of the Mother, no less than that of Sri Aurobindo, has gone, the phenomenon of matter becoming supramentalised, which is the central insight of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, has to occur first in material forms other than theirs. Neither the Master nor the Mother was attached to their own forms being the prime exemplars of supramentalisation: if they sought to supramentalise these, it was in order to take the perilous pioneer adventure upon their own selves and facilitate the spiritual task of their children. Their true concern is simply to actualise, in whoever is available, the phenomenon they have

visioned as the fulfilment of evolutionary earth.

The desired actualisation would certainly come sooner if the Supermind attained the new Mother-manifestation for which it now waits. But, for the Supermind's swift success, we have to prove our little world of sadhana here worthy. Already the sacrificial fall the Mother has allowed of her wonderful body has given us a sense as if not only we but the whole earth had obtained a secret uplift. We should ensure that the intense impetus received by us to be re-born does not run to waste. Concentratedly we should lend our entire selves to it. Just as the Mother's constant cry was "As You will, as You will", so also our hearts should quicken, every moment, with a radiant feeling of the destiny she paradoxically compassed when, according to medical reports, her heart failed — the destiny for which she had taken birth. Let us never forget those lines of Sri Aurobindo's about Savitri:

> Even though all falters and falls and sees an end
> And the heart fails and only are death and night,
> God-given her strength can battle against doom...[1]

K. D. SETHNA

[1] *Savitri* (Cent. ed., vol. 29, p. 462)

The divine force is with you — feel its presence more and more and be very careful never to betray it.

Feel, wish, act, that you may be new beings for the realisation of a new world and for this my blessings shall be always with you.

The Mother